

## Message Text

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ACTION FBOE-00

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 /011 W  
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R 041324Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO USIA WASHDC

INFO AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

SECSTATE WASHDC 7540

UNCLAS NEW DELHI 11437

USIAC

INA FOR NALLE AND IOA FROM GILDNER

E.O. 11652: N/A

SUBJECT: USIS CALCUTTA BUILDING PROJECT

REF: NEW DELHI 11321

1. FOLLOWING DISCUSSIONS IN MAY WITH BORK IN IOA/S AND INA, WE HAVE EXHAUSTIVELY REVIEWED BUILDING PLANS WITH ALL CONCERNED IN USIS AND CONGEN CALCUTTA AND EMBASSY DELHI.

2. UNANIMOUS CONCLUSION IS THAT PRESENT BUILDING DESIGN BEING DEVELOPED BY CHATTERJEE AND POLK DOES NORPT. NOT PROVIDE THE KIND OF FLEXIBLE PROGRAMMING SPACE REQUIRED FOR CURRENT AND PROJECTED USIS PROGRAM NEEDS AND TECHNIQUES. FOR EXAMPLE, THE SOLE MULTIPURPOSE ROOM AS PLANNED IS ONLY 18 BY 36 FEET WHICH IS CLEARLY INADEQUATE. THE ONLY OTHER PROGRAM AREA IS THE LONG NARROW AUDITORIUM WITH FIXED CHAIRS AND SLOPING FLOOR THAT PROVIDES NO FLEXIBILITY AT ALL. EVEN THE SEATING CAPACITY FOR THAT SPACE IS TOO SMALL.

3. THE OFFICES ARE STACKED IN A THREE-STOREY TOWER CONSISTING OF 40 PERCENT SERVICE AREA FOR STAIRWELLS, ELEVATORS, AIR SYSTEMS AND HALLWAYS. THEREFORE THE REMAINING OFFICE SPACE IS INEFFICIENT. THE LIBRARY SPACE IS ALSO SMALLER, LESS FLEXIBLE, HARDER TO  
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SUPERVISE THAN PRESENT USIS QUARTERS. THE BUILDING GENERALLY

WOULD BE STAFF INTENSIVE AND THAT BODES ILL FOR THE FUTURE.  
PARKING IS INEFFICIENTLY DESIGNED.

4. A CLOSE STUDY OF THE FILES ON THE HISTORY OF THIS PROJECT AND DISCUSSIONS WITH THOSE WHO WERE HERE EARLIER, INDICATES THAT FROM THE OUTSET THE POST WAS CONFRONTED WITH A FUNDAMENTALLY POOR AND OUT-OF-DATE DESIGN CONCEPT THAT IT WAS TOLD COULD NOT BE ALTERED. (THERE WERE ALSO SERIOUS QUESTIONS RAISED ABOUT THE ARCHITECTURAL FIRM WHICH IS THE SAME RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PROBLEMATIC USIS DELHI BUILDING.) IN SPITE OF MANY PROTESTS OVER THE YEARS ON THE OVERALL DESIGN (SEE ALBERT HEMSING'S LETTER OF OCTOBER 23, 1973 AS ONLY ONE EXAMPLE), THE POST COULD NOT GET BEYOND CONTINUAL DEBATES ON RELATIVELY MINOR ISSUES AND DETAILS SUCH AS THE LOCATION OF VARIOUS ROOMS AND THE AIRCONDITIONING, THE FENESTRATION FOR THE LIBRARY, PARKING SPACE, ETC.

5. WE HAVE EXPLORED THE POSSIBILITY AGAIN OF SHIFTING SPACES, BUT NOTHING SATISFACTORY IN THIS LINE CAN GIVE US WHAT WE NEED AND DOES NOT DEAL WITH THE OTHER PROBLEMS, ESPECIALLY THE INEFFICIENT AND AWKWARD USE OF SPACE GENERALLY.

6. WE ARE CONVINCED THAT IT IS QUITE POSSIBLE TO DESIGN A CONSIDERABLY CHEAPER, EFFICIENT, ATTRACTIVE AND USEFUL BUILDING, THAT WOULD BE A MUCH BETTER INVESTMENT FOR THE USG AND USEFUL FOR USIS.

7. WHILE WE REALIZE THAT THE PLANS ARE 60 PERCENT COMPLETE, AND THAT MONEY, TIME AND EFFORT HAVE BEEN EXPENDED, WE RECOMMEND THAT FURTHER WORK ON THIS PROJECT AS PRESENTLY CONCEIVED BE STOPPED, BECAUSE IT IS NOT IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE U.S.

8. PENDING RESOLUTION OF FUTURE US SPACE REQUIREMENTS IN CALCUTTA, USIS CAN REMAIN IN ITS PRESENT LOCATION WHERE WE HOLD A NEW FIVE-YEAR LEASE WITH AN OPTION TO RENEW. WITH SOME NECESSARY RENOVATIONS THAT HAVE NOT BEEN UNDERTAKEN BECAUSE OF THE PROSPECT THAT USIS WOULD MOVE, IT WILL MEET OUR NEEDS MORE EFFECTIVELY THAN THE PROJECTED BUILDING.

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9. THE EMBASSY HAS MADE PARALLEL RECOMMENDATIONS IN REFTEL WHICH ALSO WERE DISCUSSED WITH THE LOCAL FBO OFFICE AND VISITING FBO ARCHITECT MORI.GILDNER

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** n/a  
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**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 04 AUG 1976  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** n/a  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** n/a  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:**  
**Disposition Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
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**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
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**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** n/a  
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**Reference:** 76 NEW DELHI 11321  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** SmithRJ  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 03 MAR 2004  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <03 MAR 2004 by ReddocGW>; APPROVED <18 JAN 2005 by SmithRJ>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
04 MAY 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** USIS CALCUTTA BUILDING PROJECT  
**TAGS:** ABLD, IN  
**To:** FBO  
USIA  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006